



Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana: Securing India's Fields, Empowering Its Farmers

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Farming in India is not merely an occupation — it is the heartbeat of the nation. Yet, every season, millions of farmers face the unpredictable forces of nature. A sudden drought, an untimely flood, or a pest outbreak can turn months of hard work into loss overnight. To shield farmers from such uncertainties, the Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in 2016. This landmark crop insurance scheme has become a symbol of trust, safety, and empowerment, offering farmers financial security and renewed confidence to cultivate without fear.

PMFBY: India's Largest Crop Insurance Movement

Today, PMFBY stands tall as the world's largest crop insurance scheme, covering over 2.16 crore farmers and millions of hectares of farmland across India. The scheme has transformed agricultural risk management, with more than 97% of reported claims settled nationwide, and several states — including Goa, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Tamil Nadu — achieving 100% claim settlements. Farmers contribute only 2% of the sum insured for Kharif crops, 1.5% for Rabi crops, and 5% for commercial or horticultural crops, making it affordable for all. Since 2020, PMFBY has become voluntary, and over 55% of enrolled farmers are non-loanee participants, reflecting a growing sense of ownership and trust. Despite budget adjustments, the government has committed a total outlay of ₹69,515 crore for 2021–26, underscoring its long-term vision for farmer welfare and agricultural sustainability.

Comprehensive Coverage Across Every Stage

PMFBY protects farmers from sowing to harvesting, ensuring that every stage of cultivation is secured. It compensates for losses caused by natural calamities such as droughts, floods, cyclones, landslides, hailstorms, and pest or disease attacks. In situations where sowing is prevented due to adverse weather, farmers receive up to 25% of the insured sum. Post-harvest losses — especially for crops left to dry in the field (“cut and spread”) — are covered for up to 14 days after harvest against cyclones or unseasonal rains. For localized calamities like hailstorms or inundation affecting specific farms, individual loss assessments ensure accurate and fair compensation.

Eligibility, Flexibility, and Fair Terms

PMFBY is open to all farmers growing notified crops in notified areas, including tenant and sharecroppers. The insurance period corresponds to the crop season — Kharif (monsoon) and Rabi (winter). The sum insured is based on the threshold yield multiplied by the Minimum Support Price (MSP) or the loan amount for loanee farmers. Exclusions include preventable losses, negligence, war, riots, or non-notified events. Post-2020 reforms made enrollment voluntary, giving farmers the choice to participate freely. This flexibility, coupled with digital transparency and quicker settlements, has significantly boosted farmer confidence.

Simple and Transparent Claim Process

The claim procedure under PMFBY is designed to be farmer-friendly and time-efficient.

1. **Enrollment:** Farmers register through banks, Common Service Centres (CSCs), or insurance company portals by submitting Aadhaar, bank account, and crop details.
2. **Premium Payment:** The premium is either auto-debited or paid directly during enrollment.
3. **Monitoring:** Government agencies and insurers monitor crop health using field surveys, drones, and satellite data.
4. **Reporting Loss:** In case of crop damage, farmers must promptly inform the local agriculture office, insurer, or bank.
5. **Assessment:** Area-based losses are determined through Crop Cutting Experiments (CCE), while individual assessments are done for localized risks.
6. **Claim Settlement:** Compensation is calculated and credited directly to farmers' bank accounts, usually within 2–3 months after verification.

This process ensures speed, transparency, and accountability, reducing delays and enhancing trust among farmers.

Practical Tips for Farmers

- Enroll early in the crop season to avoid last-minute delays.
- Report losses immediately after damage occurs.
- Maintain records of crop condition and weather events for claim verification.
- Use official portals, helplines, and grievance platforms to track claims.
- Stay informed through local agricultural offices and awareness programs.

Farmers Speak: Real Stories, Real Relief

“When a hailstorm destroyed my wheat crop, I thought the season was lost. But within two months, I received compensation under PMFBY. It helped me repay my loans and buy seeds for the next crop”— *Suresh Kumar, Farmer, Madhya Pradesh.*

Such stories are becoming common across India. PMFBY has restored faith among farmers by ensuring that a season's loss does not translate into a lifetime of debt. It has become the backbone of financial security and self-reliance in rural India.

Technology Driving Transparency

The government has embraced cutting-edge technologies to make the scheme faster and fairer. The use of satellite imagery, remote sensing, drone surveys, and mobile applications has revolutionized crop damage assessment. Awareness drives, simplified digital platforms, and local language outreach programs are making enrollment easier for small and marginal farmers. States are also offering additional premium support and flexibility to enhance participation.

PMFBY in Numbers (2023–24)

- 2.16 crore farmers insured
- 97% claims settled
- ₹69,515 crore government outlay (2021–26)
- 55% non-loanee farmer participation
- 2%, 1.5%, and 5% farmer premium rates

A Revolution in Rural Resilience

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana represents a historic leap toward risk-free and resilient agriculture. It empowers farmers to adopt modern practices, use quality inputs, and invest confidently without the fear of natural loss. While challenges such as delayed claim settlements or limitations in area-based assessments still exist, ongoing reforms and technological integration are bridging these gaps rapidly. PMFBY has not only stabilized farmer incomes but also strengthened the foundation of India's food security.

Conclusion: Toward a Prosperous and Protected India

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana stands as a beacon of hope for millions of farmers who brave the uncertainties of nature every season. It is not merely an insurance scheme — it is a promise of protection, dignity, and empowerment. By providing a safety net against crop failures, PMFBY ensures that no farmer is left helpless after disaster. It reinforces the government's vision of “Samriddh Kisan, Samriddh Bharat” (Prosperous Farmers, Prosperous India) and strengthens the nation's march toward a secure, sustainable, and self-reliant agricultural future.